AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION

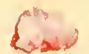
OF THE

INDIAN HILL CEMETERY,

MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

BY REV. FREDERIC J. GOODWIN.
RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, MIDDLETOWN.

MIDDLETOWN:
CHARLES H. PELTON, PRINTER.
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The following Address is published by the Directors of the INDIAN HILL CEMETERY.

ADDRESS.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens:

We have assembled here to-day for the performance of a very important duty. We are here to set apart these beautiful Grounds for a peculiarly sacred purpose. We are here to consecrate them exclusively to the service and repose of the dead. In every respect it is well for us thus to be here. It is well for us thus to be mindful of the departed. It is well for the living thus to provide for the dead.

To feel, or to feign indifference for those who have left us, is well nigh impossible. We can never entirely forget them. We cannot but in numberless ways be reminded of them. Years may pass and effect their changes, but still will memory at times, renew the anguish, and open afresh the wounds which were beginning to be healed. But though we can never be wholly insensible in regard to those who have been taken from us ; how few are there yet to be found among us, who have been wont practically to evince a deep and marked interest in respect to them. We have followed the remains of those who were near and dear to us, to their last home, but how little thought have we given for the decent aspect of their places of sepulture. How little concern have we manifested for their fitness and adaptation to the sacred object, for which they have been destined. We are permitted to believe that a different and a better spirit, in this particular, is

beginning to prevail among us, as a people. An interest of this nature is continually increasing, and on every hand. In very many of our towns and cities, may we now find Associations formed for a purpose similar to that, which we ourselves, have before us. We rejoice that it is so. We look upon the movement for founding rural Cemeteries in the neighborhood of our towns and cities, as one of the noblest—the most desirable—the most salutary, of the times in which we live. In the site you have chosen, as a garden tomb, where yourselves and your children, side by side, may quietly lie till that hour, when the trump of the Archangel shall summon you from the dead, we believe you will be admitted to have been peculiarly happy. Long has it been a favorite spot. It is a spot, moreover, which from the very name applied to it, and the associations connected with it, is seen to be suited for its destined purpose. Forcibly must it remind us that change and decay, are inscribed alike on all of us, that passing away is written on the world, and all that the world contains. Where now is the red man of the forest, who here was wont to roam—who here found so much to attract and interest, who here chose for himself a home. Long since could it be said of them, as it will one day be said of us, they have passed away. The remains of many of them, we may believe, here lie buried. Usually, we know they laid the fallen warrior on some lofty eminence, commanding the most extensive view of cliff and dale, and forests and rivers, as though the departed would be comforted in hovering around his tomb, by visions imaging the happy hunting grounds of the far off spirit land. Three quarters of a century since, as I have learned from one whose locks have been whitened by the frosts and snows of near ninety winters, there were those desirous to set this place apart, for a purpose, the same as that to which it now is destined. There were here in that early day, actually placed the remains of a few, that still are undisturbed, that still beneath these green sods are sleeping. Difficulties, however were then found to exist, in the way of obtaining this beautiful spot, as a city for the dead, which happily for us, are now removed. To-day, no farther obstacles existing, we are enabled, solemly, to set it apart as a resting place for the departed. In its distance from the habitations of the living, in its extent of ground, in its singular quiet, in its easy access, and in its natural features, it is the very place that would have been selected by us, for such a purpose. It has long been noted for its beauty ; its retired character, and its fine prospect. It is a lovely,

a delightful spot. There is nothing here to inspire gloom and sadness; but much, as there should be, to excite within us cheerful emotions. On the summit of these hills, the first beams of the morning play, and departing day, loves to linger around them. Singularly, in every respect, would it seem to be suited, to have the demands of taste, and of feeling, and the proprieties of the grave, all alike, to be answered.

It may here not be amiss for us, to refer you somewhat particularly to the history of rural Cemeteries. We are not then, by any means, to regard them as of modern origin. Places of burial, such as these, secluded and tranquil, were those selected in very early times. The Ancients allowed no Grave Yards within their cities. The Aboriginal Germans were wont to bury the departed, in groves consecrated by their Priests. In the vicinity of their great cities, the Ancient Egyptians established extensive cities of the dead. The Romans bore the remains of those that had left them, to pleasant groves in the suburbs of the eternal city, the gardens of the villa, or vales beside the shaded and silent stream, upon the margin of the lone and solemn sea, or to rural heights along the public ways, in the midst of trees and ornamental walks, and ever varying flowers. The Appian way was crowded with monuments to the departed. The sentiment of the Roman poet:

"Et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen,"

was one which was duly heeded. Some beautiful, or simple device as "siste viator," pause traveler, or "sit tibi terra levis," may the earth rest lightly upon thee; could invite at once to sympathy, and appeal in language strong, to the mourner or the passer by. As with the Romans, so too with the Greeks. They consigned the remains of those they loved, to the secluded recesses of wooded heights and vales, close by the fountain, and the murmuring stream. The very groves, so famous for their schools of philosophy, were appointed for the sepulchres of their men of renown.

But there are other cases different from these with which we are all familiar. They are furnished as from the pages of the inspired volume. There may we learn the custom of the Patriarchs. There shall we find the quiet grove selected as the fit place of sepulture. When Sarah died, Abraham, we are told, the Father of the faithful, purchased for a burial place the field of Ephron which

was in Machpelah, before Mamre, and the cave which was in the field, with all the trees in tho field, and in the borders round about it, to be made sure unto him forever. There he buried his wife, and there they buried Abraham. There too, was Sarah buried, and Rebekah, and Leah. There too, where the trees of the field waved over their remains, could the dying Jacob at a later day from the distant land of his sojourning, give commandment for his own interment, beside them. "When he had blessed his Sons, he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people, bury me with my Fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron." There too, to that same rural family burying place; the thoughts of the dying Joseph, as they turned away from Pyramid and Mausoleum, did not fail to be directed. There would he have his bones to rest with his Fathers. "And he took an oath of the children of Israel saying, ye shall carry up my bones from hence." It was this love of rural sepulture, that led the children of Israel to bury their dead beneath the trees, as Deborah was buried, or in the quiet valley, as Moses was buried, or on the hill top, as Eleazer, the son of Aaron was buried. It was this same spirit that made the hill sides and dales around the Holy City, a Cemetery for the Dead. Indeed, so reasonable was deemed this spirit, and so marked was its exercise, that the home for the dead, was not permitted amid the habitations of the living. Thus at the scene of the crucifixion, it is said of the Saints who came out of their graves, that they went into the Holy City. Thus the potter's field was without the walls of Jerusalem. Thus, too, the young man of Nain, was already so far borne upon his way to his long resting place, as to be beyond the gates of the city, when the power of the Saviour raised him to life again, and restored him to his afflicted, widowed mother. Thus too, the new tomb hewn out of a rock in which the body of the crucified Saviour was laid, was near the base of Calvary, without the walls of the city, and in that place of quiet and innocent pleasure, a garden. Indeed, the practice now referred to, would seem to have been one from which antiquity knew scarcely a deviation. The custom says Evelyn, "of burying in Churches, and near about them, especially in great cities, is a novel presumption, indecent, sordid, and very prejudicial to health." It was not, by any means, the practice of the Primitive Church. The early Christians were accustomed to bury their dead in rural retreats. It was only gradually and against constant protests of the Church, that the practice of inter-

ments in Cathedrals and the yards of Churches, was introduced and became prevalent. The celebrated Bingham, in his Origines Ecclesiasticæ states that "church yards owe their origin to respect paid to the remains of Saints and Martyrs, which was shewn first, by building Churches and Chapels over them; and then by a general desire of people to be interred as near their sacred dust as possible." This privilege was at first accorded only to those who had enriched the Church, and to the most eminent Saints. As early, however, as the sixth century, the great body of the people were allowed places, not only under the Church wall, but in the consecrated space of ground surrounding it. To be deprived of this privilege—to be excluded from the consecrated court of the Church, became at length a brand of reprobation and infamy. Hence, though constantly protested, and sometimes legislated against, arose the custom of the grave yard beside the Church, and in the midst of the city.

But the practice of interring the dead in the secluded Cemetery, is, after all, far more common, even in this day, than the most of us may, perhaps, suppose. The most striking exceptions to the contrary, are to be found in the cases of Great Britain, and our own country. And here it may not be amiss to state, that the English Parliament have recently passed an act prohibiting burials in cities, after January, eighteen hundred fifty one. In most other instances the practice referred to, very generally prevails. With the Chinese, it is the same now as it was several thousand years ago. Their tombs and sepulchres are always built outside the city walls, and usually upon a hill, which is planted with cypress and pine trees. In Persia too, the places of sepulture, must be far from dwellings. The Mahomedans again show much better taste than Christians, in their mausoleums and burying places. They never bury in the temples, or within the walls of a town. Indifferent, as they may be to the ordinary exhibitions of the fine arts, they yet select with the utmost care their places of burial, and tastefully embellish them. They regard it as a religious duty, around the graves of their relatives, to plant trees and shrubbery. The Grounds thus devoted to the dead, possess with them a peculiar sanctity. They are never violated. The storms of war, that so repeatedly have sacked the cities of the living, come not nigh to them. Victory and defeat, alike have respect to the limits of their domain.

But here we may be expected, briefly to allude, to some considerations, why an undertaking of the nature of that before us

should not be regarded by us with indifference—why it should excite alike in all of us, no ordinary degree of interest. By means then, of this city of the dead, which we found here to-day, we shall perpetuate the memory of the departed. In the burial places of our towns and cities, this is well nigh impossible. Thousands, there are once buried there, whose graves are lost. Most generally would it seem, that there was none other object had in view with respect to them, than to confine the remains of the departed, to the smallest portion of earth that would hide them. How often moreover, has the same spot of ground been made to answer, not for one tenant alone, but for another, and still another. We cannot here refrain from introducing a passage from one of the papers of Addison, entitled Reflections in Westminster Abbey. " Upon my going into the Church, he says, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave, and saw in every shovel full of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull, intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldreing earth that some time or other, had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself, what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter." Language of this character, we doubt not, most accurately describes the actual condition, of almost numberless places of sepulture, throughout the land. They are crowded with the dead, till there is no more place to bury them. Their whole appearance, moreover, very often indicates, the most unpardonable neglect. Not a tree, it may be, will there be found to shelter their barrenness—not a shrub to spread a grateful shade over the new made hillock. They seem, in many instances, as little suited as possible, to invite the visits of the seriously disposed—to tranquilize the feelings of surviving friends, and to gratify that disposition, which would lead us all, to pay respect to the ashes of the departed.

But, aside from this circumstance, how liable are they in our towns and cities to be diverted from the purpose for which they were originally intended. How often do we find them encroached upon; how often is the new made street permitted to pass through them; how often are they entirely vacated, to make improvements for the

living. A change of this character, we see it stated, has been just effected, in reference to an important Cemetery, in one of our largest cities. The bones of the dead, must be disturbed, to make room for the habitations of the living. Such has frequently been the case in days that are past, such, under similar circumstances, will it be again. The truth is, in the crowded and growing town, there can be no certainty, that the dead shall long be permitted to rest quietly, in their graves. Experience has shewn that at almost any time, they are liable to be removed. But in a spot like this, in the rural Cemetery which now, in every quarter of the land, is calling forth so general an interest, there is the moral certainty that the remains of those we love, shall lay where the hand of affection places them. These hallowed hills and vales are made forever sure to us, by the strong guaranty of law. The State throws her arms, as it were, around them, to shield and protect them. They can not be diverted from their purpose, they can not be disturbed. But when such is the case, who, we may ask in the language of the Poet :

" Who would lay
His body in the city burial place,
To be thrown up again by some rude Sexton ;
And yield its narrow house another tenant,
Ere the moist flesh, had mingled with the dust,
Ere the tenacious hair, had left the scalp,
Exposed to insult lewd, and wantonness."
* * * * * *
" Let me lie in some quiet, rural spot,
There are the dead respected. The poor hind,
Unlettered, as he is, would scorn to invade
The silent resting place of death."

But not only to perpetuate the memory of the departed, to ensure the well being of the living, we should countenance and encourage an undertaking, such as that before us. Health, without any question, demands the rural Cemetery. On a point like this, there will be among us, no diversity of opinion. Men have become convinced how injurious it is to the health of the living, to remain for a long time, in the vicinity of the dead. " The effluvia of putrifaction," says one, " easily escape from them, and diffuse themselves in the air. The consequences to those exposed to them, can not be otherwise than injurious and dangerous." At present, the burying in Churches is almost every where suppressed, or at least permitted only under certain restrictions. Even in Naples

and Rome, the general practice, of erecting sepulchres in Churches, was forbidden in eighteen hundred nine; and the foundation of burial places without the city, was provided for. Facts of this character have an important bearing upon the point before us. We have recently had our attention called to a carefully prepared report, on the results of the practice of interment in towns. The circumstances which are there adduced, and the opinions of various most eminent medical men, in respect to them, are of such a nature, as would bring home, we believe, conviction to almost every mind, of the danger incurred, by having the resting places of the departed, amid the habitations of the living. The most dreadful maladies to which man is liable, there is reason to believe, have been often thus occasioned. They have come forth from the shallow and crowded graves, to avenge so unseemly a bestowment of the dead.

But not only by means of the Rural Cemetery, is there best perpetuated the memory of the departed; and most effectually secured the well being of the living; there are thus also derived, important moral lessons which may claim our regard. If not wholly beyond the power of religious teaching, if not entirely insensible to all the better feelings of our nature, we know not how it can be possible for us to linger among the resting places of the departed, and not derive from them instruction and benefit. There is not a single association connected with such a spot, which may not be turned to good account. How forcibly does it remind us of the frail and transitory character of this, our earthly being; how plainly does it instruct us, as to the true value of life, its duties, and its destination. Every little mound of earth that marks the bed of a sleeper; every stone that we look upon, will bring home to us its important lessons. Do we stand by the spot where the dust of a dear christian friend reposes; how full of tenderness and truth, from the grave of that friend, will his voice be speaking to us. How feelingly, will it remind us, of the many hours of pleasant converse, we were once permitted to spend together. How vividly, will it bring up before us, the many virtues which adorned his character, and which endeared him to us. How faithfully, will it bear its testimony to his consistent life and character, his youthful purity, his holy purposes, his disinterested and generous deeds. We seem, at such a time, to hear the very tones of affection, in which the departed was wont to speak, whispering in our ears—

"We sometimes dream their pleasant smiles;
Still on us, sweetly fall!
Their tones of love, we faintly hear,
Our names, in sadness call.
We know that they are happy,
With their Angel plumage on;
But our hearts are very desolate,
To think that they are gone.

The departed! The departed!
They visit us in dreams,
And they glide above our memories,
Like shadows over streams;
But where the cheerful lights of home,
In constant lustre burn,
The departed! The departed!
Can never more return!"

Oh! it cannot be; but that from this communion with the dead, we shall return to the world purer, wiser and better, than we were. In a manner not to be resisted by us, and by motives not to be disregarded, shall we feel ourselves called upon to be good and virtuous, and faithful as were they.

But there are other graves from whence those slumbering in death still will speak. Here, from the grave of a parent, whose counsel was too oft alas, and too long unheeded, there is heard a voice which speaks in tones that cannot be forgotten. It tells the reckless son of his waywardness, his want of filial reverence; his neglect of his counsels; his disregard of his prayers. From the lips sealed in perpetual silence, and from the eyes that shall open on the world of life no more; the guilty ear hears a voice to say, that the grey hairs of his father, went down to the grave, not in sorrow alone, but in shame; that the follies of his Son made them thus go down.

Here, by another grave, to that mourner, with his eyes filled with tears, comes again the sweetest of remembered things, a mother's smile, sweeter now and holier far than ever.

Here from the white stone, emblem of the innocence it covers, the beholder is informed of one who breathed out his tender soul, almost in the instant of receiving it.

"He died e're his expanding soul
Had ever burned with wrong desires,
Had ever spurned at Heaven's control,
Or ever quenched its sacred fires,"

Of such an one, how pleasant the remembrance. How tender, all the associations connected with them. How often are we reminded of them.

"The little ones—the little ones,
How they loiter on our way;
Though many years have fled and gone,
Since they were laid away.
The sod that covers them has lost
The verdure once it wore,
But in our hearts their memory dwells,
And freshens evermore.

The little ones—the little ones!
O, how can we forget,
Their graceful forms and winsome ways,
Are here to bless us yet,
And often when some tiny step,
Steals after us like rain,
We turn unconsciously to greet
Our little ones again!"

Without so much as knowing what labor and vexation mean, that peaceful infant lies still and is quiet; he sleeps and is at rest.

Here, side by side, sleeps the devoted Christian Mother, and the no less faithful Christian Father. As we stand by their graves, their holy life, their peaceful death comes up before us, and with a power over us, which we would not resist. "Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like his;" is the wish, which at such a time pervades every bosom, is the prayer, which at such a time, the heart would utter. We know that they are blessed. They may not, indeed, have entered on the bliss of Heaven together, but their separation has been only for a season.

"Parted for a little while; again they meet
To part no more;
And with celestial wisdom greet,
On an immortal shore."

Here, again, is the resting place of one, honored as an Ambassador of Jesus, one who was faithful in his teachings and himself, "a living sermon of the truth he taught." As he was useful in life, so in death is his influence still felt for good. Remember the words, says a voice from his resting place; remember the words

which I spake unto you, while I was yet present with you. The end of such an one could not have been otherwise than as furnishing evidence of Heaven.

"His weary spirit breathed itself to sleep
So peacefully, it seemed a sin to weep."
* * * * * *
"In my last hour be Heaven as kind to me,
I ask no more than this, to die like thee."

But time would fail me, to tell how we may here come to commune with all the near and the beloved departed; with the sister that faded in her early flower, with the brother that sank in his generous promise, with the little son or daughter, whose face shines like a far-off star in memory; with the meek, the noble, the loving, the pure, and the saintly. Make we then here, this quiet resting place, one that shall invite to meditation. Make we beautiful here, the spot for our dead. Make we attractive and consoling, not gloomy and repulsive, this home for the departed. Let the sun shine on it cheerful, but still and solemn, like the light of another life. With velvet verdure, let these green hills be covered, let the purest flowers here breathe forth their purfume, and trees and shrubbery, line the pathway to the dead. Let the rose and ivy, embower their silent rest. Let the oak and evergreen, wave above it, and the kind birds chant the requiem, of the sleeper there. Make we like the Moravians, our burial place, the dearest the most favorite spot. Their care of the dead; their attention to the place of rest in which they lie, is known to all. With them, will be found no marks of indifference; no evidences of neglect, on ground sacred to the departed.

"There's not a hillock, mouldering near the spot
By one dishonored, or by all forgot,
To some warm heart, the poorest dust is near
From some kind eye, the meanest, claims a tear,
And oft the living, by affection led,
Are wont to walk in spirit, with their dead,
Where no dark cypress, casts a doleful gloom,
No blighting yew, sheds poison o'er the tomb,
But white and red, with intermingling flowers,
The graves look beautiful, in sun and showers.
Green myrtles fence them, and beyond that bound,
Runs the clear rill, with ever murmuring sound,
'Tis not a scene for grief to nourish care,
It breathes of hope, it moves the heart to prayer."

Such, let the resting place of the dead be with us. Let us associate it, not with gloom and with sadness, but with the fulfillment of all the high hopes, and the precious promises connected with our holy religion. "Come not, was the recent language of a dying christian to his dearest earthly friend, come not to my grave in saduess at the lonely hour of evening, when all is darkness around you; but come with cheerfulness in the first pleasant light of the morning, when the birds are sweetly singing above me; when the flowers are blooming, and the sun is brightly shining. At such an hour learn to think of me only as peacefully resting beneath the green sods that cover me, till the time shall come for me to rise in glory." Such, we believe, is the view permitted to every faithful christian, to take in reference to the grave. It is for a time, and for a time only, the resting place of the body, meanwhile the immortal spirit with which it is again to be united, is happy with its Saviour. Were it not for a truth like this, were it not that the gospel, had brought light and immortality to light; the grave might well be associated with gloom. But we know, that we are not to rest forever, in its embraces. A day approaches when we shall burst the chains which confine us there.

> " The time draws on
> When not a single spot of burial earth
> Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,
> But must give up its long committed dust
> Inviolate."

With every reason, then, may we associate with the grave, the idea of cheerfulness and hope; of warm suns and green verdure, and blooming flowers. To the true child of God, it is only that thin barrier appointed on the part of God, which divides Earth from Heaven. To the true child of God it is permitted to look upon the grave, as the passage, to never ending life. Through the gates of the grave, shall he pass to his home of endless blessedness.

> " There, he iu every streete
> His dearest friends again shall meete,
> And pleasures, more refined and sweete,
> And never loose them more."

But aside from the various considerations, already referred to, there are feelings connected with our own mortality, which should lead us to contemplate with peculiar interest, this repository of the

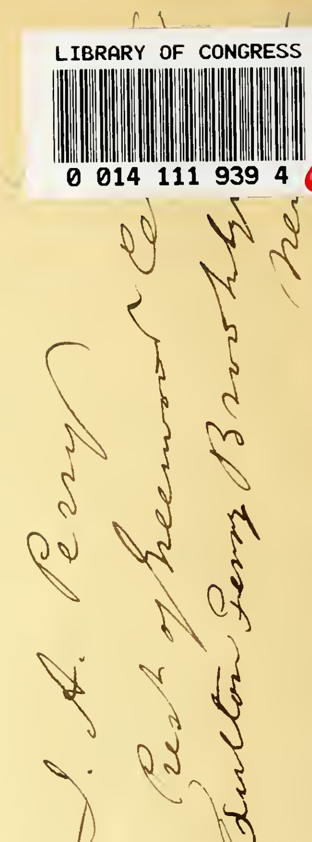
dead. It is not a matter of indifference, with any of us, where we ourselves may rest. We desire to have the spot in which our remains may lie, to be known and fondly remembered. We derive pleasure from the reflection, that in the midst of their sorrows, it shall be visited by those that were dear to us. How beautiful and expressive is the well known form of oriental benediction; "May you die among your own kindred." None there are, among us here to-day, who do not desire that it may be verified in reference to ourselves. None there are, who do not desire, that their flesh may moulder to dust, in fellowship with the dust of kindred, and friends, and neighbors. It was the lament of the red man of the forest; "we are forced to leave the graves of our Fathers." "Bury me not in Egypt, said Jacob to his son Joseph, but I will lie with my Fathers, and thou shall carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place." "Let me die, said the aged Barzillai, in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother." Language such as this, is the natural expression of human feeling. As in life, it was our privilege to share the society of those who were bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, so in death would we have our home with theirs. We would lie in the dust, side by side, with those whom we here have loved, with whom we took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, and be blessed by a communion with them.

It may not be inappropriate for us on an occasion, and at a time like this, to have this truth of our own mortality brought vividly home to us. Often may we come to this consecrated spot, slowly and solemnly, and in tears follow those whose eyes shall be closed upon all earthly scenes forever; but I see in the future another coming, from which we shall not return. Other mourners will then pass sadly by; and other eyes shall weep, because we have gone to our long home. Do what we may, we cannot change the reality; we cannot avoid the doom of death. There can be no exemption from the struggle with the great destroyer.

"Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede, pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres."

"Yet a few more years, or months perhaps,
Or moments, pass in silent lapse,
And time with us, shall be no more,
No more the sun, these eyes shall view,
Earth, o'er these limbs her dust shall strew,
And life's delusive dream be o'er."

May this spot, as oft as we shall visit it, remind us of an event like this, and lead us through Christ, our Saviour, rightly to prepare for it. May it be for us, to find comfort in the thought, that if thus prepared we shall not slumber beneath these green sods forever, but be one day permitted to take our part in the scenes of a blessed, a glorious resurrection. To consecrate this spot of ground as a resting place for the dead till that time shall come; till the dawn of the great Easter of the universe—to set it apart as a rural Cemetery, where they may lie in safety, till death itself shall have lost its power, is the purpose for which we, in common with this vast assembly, have come together here to-day. I stand here, then, by the order, and in behalf of the Association present, to declare that through the services in which we have now engaged these beautiful grounds with their trees, their winding walks, their shrubbery, and flowers, are to be henceforth and forever, deemed as consecrated to a sacred purpose. They are no longer ours. They have passed away from our hands. They belong no more to the living. In the highest, the fullest, the noblest sense they belong to God and to the Dead. Consecrated and hallowed as thus they are, may they thus remain. May they be kept inviolate; may they be free from desecration forever.


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